

Maud O. Thomas, Pub.

BEAVER, OKLA.

Lavender
Creighton's
Lovers

By OLIVIA B. STROHM

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CHAPTER VII.

A few days later, attended by a small military escort, the party left the fort.

Winslow explained to the commander that there was double reason for haste—in their unwillingness to further trespass on his hospitality, no less than in the impatience of the ladies to join their relatives. Reasons which, though with all hospitable intent, the colonel supplemented by the practical suggestion that they take advantage of the present, frosty condition of the trail. A little later, when the spring thaw had set in, the swamp lands would be well nigh impassable.

There being no available guides at the fort, it was decided that the soldiers accompany them to the nearest Indian village, a half day's march away, where they could obtain ponies and a guide for the journey north.

The little party arrived at nightfall within the Indian settlement, and the soldiers returned to the fort, having made arrangements with the chief of the village for their safe conduct.

Left to themselves in the gloomy wigwam, the travelers had much ado to be cheerful. The place was ill-smelling and close, and the flickering firelight but served to bring into bolder relief the grotesque shadows that flouted them from every corner.

The loose-fitting skins of which the walls were made, creaked and flapped dismally. The brush of a fox and the head of a deer hung over the doorway; stray feathers blew over the floor as the wind stole in. Mrs. Creighton gave a shiver of disgust.

"How grewsome this place is. Trophies of dead things everywhere! I feel as though we were entertaining ghosts."

Lavender laughed low—uneasily. "Hush, and she lifted a warning finger. "Somebody is outside."

Winslow lifted the heavy flap that curtained the threshold. A rush of air made the torch burn low, and in the darkness they could dimly discern the figure of a man—tall, with a waving eagle plume above a bearded head.

"Come in, friend," said Winslow, but the stranger made no move to enter. "Is the white maiden here?" His speech was guttural, but not harsh. "Where is the maid who is not afraid of an Osage arrow? Owatoga would speak with her."

Owatoga! Then he had followed them. Was it as friend or foe? Lavender rose and went to the opening. "I am here, Owatoga."

There was a nervous quiver in her voice, and she grasped Winslow's arm, but the gigantic figure outside made no move nearer.

"You will need a guide—Owatoga knows the forest," he said.

Winslow dropped the curtain, and stood outside in the darkness, keeping close to Lavender as he addressed the Indian.

"You are a friend to this white maid?"

For answer, the other said, with irrelevance: "The arrow was taken out quick; Owatoga was not left to die."

"Then you are better? I am so glad," Lavender said, and the Indian responded, gravely: "Owatoga is well; he will be the guide for the white people tomorrow."

Without waiting for thanks, without further explanation, he disappeared, and Lavender whispered, triumphantly, as they reentered the wigwam: "I knew we could trust him!"

Next day they left the village, led only by their self-appointed guide. The ponies and other equipment had been bought of the Indians. Part of their route was to be that known as the Clear trail. The town of New Madrid was their first destination—there they would await the earliest boat north.

On stout Indian ponies they rode; sometimes over damp and slippery paths, but oftener where the hoofs beat rhythmic measure on the frozen way. Occasionally they crossed wandering bands of Indians, meeting with solid indifference or friendly grunts, but never a hostile show. By night camp fires kept off the cold, and sterner foes, whose hungry howling was a mocking lullaby.

Owatoga rode ahead, rigid—silent as a slain chieftain on his horse awaiting burial—the quick and the dead together.

Winslow's spirits rose with the occasion, and he beguiled with cheerful talk and unwearied attentions the "outing," as he laughingly called it.

Mrs. Creighton, too, rallied all her physical forces, and bore without flinching the discomforts of the hard travel.

America, alone, was miserable—the picture of comic distress.

Lavender was her buoyant self, and for the first time appealed to Charles in a purely personal way. Heretofore he had regarded her merely as a beautiful, but unessential factor in the situation—gradually she had come to be the sum of it.

Bent upon ambitious hopes, his fu-

ture late in carving, love was in Winslow's mind an unwelcome guest; an intruder whose visit was to be deferred as long as possible. But there were signs of its coming; as Winslow watched Lavender—observed her tender thoughtfulness toward her mother—her regard for the welfare of all. He remembered the picture she made when seated in the wood, with the Indian's head on her lap. Bare-headed, her hood the wounded man's pillow, the dying sun tipping her hair with arrow-points of bronze, she had seemed a wraith of daylight in the gathering shades. This revelation of the softer side of the girl's nature, of her ministrant care and dauntlessness in danger, touched him where ball-room blandishments or mere blithe maidenhood had failed.

She rode in advance, often turning for a word or smile. Often there were scarlet berries at her throat, or leaves twisted in mocking imitation of Owatoga's headdress.

Winslow's pleasure in the sight—his growing joy in her company, was dampened by self-reproach. Had all his hopes, his ambition for a career in the land of promise, come to this? That he could find content and satisfying happiness in the mere presence of a woman?

At last they came in sight of the Mississippi; dark, silent, the waters rolled, a vast moat; beyond it, steep and sheer, a wall of rock. To the travelers, ignorant of all that lay behind, that rocky wall might have been the fortress of the setting sun.

The spring was early, and ice drifted helplessly under its torn cerements of snow. They were not far from the settlement of New Madrid, and it was determined to follow the course of the river until the town was reached. Slowly northward, for the spring rains had begun, and the fens and marshes were slimy underfoot, and foggy overhead.

The river, bearing its burden away to the south, served them in guidance grim, but true.

At last they reached the point directly opposite New Madrid. The squat stone cabins of the settlement were huddled together on the farther bank like great cakes of ice thrown from the river.

The day was gloomy; the blustering wind, hag-ridden, hurled snow and rain in their faces with alternate spite.

"This is not exactly a welcome, warm and heartfelt, is it?" laughed



"A HARD CHOICE, TRULY," LAVENDER AGREED, WITH A SAUCY TOSS OF HER CHIN.

Winslow, as they dismounted and stood on the bank of the gray river under a scowling sky.

Out of the dusk loomed a group of wigwams, and Owatoga went forward to reconnoiter. He returned in company with another Indian whom he had engaged to ferry them over. Their few household goods had been carried in crates, bound with deerskin to the backs of ponies, and these were transferred to one pirogue. Two others were reserved for the passengers.

They arranged for the sale of the ponies and hospitality for the night, but with the first dawn the party embarked on the river.

One Indian stood in the prow, pushing aside with a long pole the cakes of ice which drifted like inquisitive monsters, close to the driving keel.

America covered in abject fear in the stern; alternately invoking the wrath of Heaven upon the rash undertaking, and beseeching Divine aid in its outcome.

The other women bore the discomfort and danger with fortitude, even pleasure. In both was a strong sense of the dramatic, the picturesque. To Lavender, especially, this was as a draught of wine—this race with the swirling ice on the dark water in the cold gray dawn. Here and there a vain star yet dangled for a last look at herself in the watery mirror.

All was quiet in the village as they neared the shore, and the boats rubbing their sides together in friendly fashion as they grated on the sand, was the only sound.

There was no tavern then in the town, but every cabin had a spare bed and seat at table where strangers were allowed to stay. For it was scarcely a welcome which these frontier folk extended—it was rather a tolerant sufferance. Such a return in money or trade as the guest saw fit to make, was accepted, but none was ever demanded. Their doors were open, and with the opening of the door they considered duty done; the stranger could make shift to find his own nook in the chimney corner.

Such fare the travelers found, and for Lavender the style held a quaint, attractive interest.

"I like this kind of hospitality," she said one day. "I like their independent attitude. What they give is freely given, and one feels that it is without effort."

"Entirely so," Winslow agreed, dryly, "and I don't like it. 'Pot luck,'

as they call it, never appealed to me. I rather enjoy being made over."

CHAPTER VIII.

Suddenly, as if to surprise them, came the spring.

The winter carpet of sodden leaves was changed to one of bright young grass. Pussy-willows, like molting birds, dotted the marshy land with their yellow feathers, and every shady nook was dappled with pale and drooping wild-flowers.

On an afternoon in early March, Winslow and Lavender strolled to the water's edge to look for the boat which was hourly expected. A skiff was moored on the beach, and Lavender jumped to its prow, and, shading her eyes from the dancing sunlight, gazed down the river.

"In faith, a fine figure-head," Winslow called, then stood, with the malicious enjoyment sometimes felt in defying conscience, watching her with every sense alive to the poise of her head and delicate wrist—to the curves of the slender figure in the homespun gown, as it swayed unsteadily in the rocking boat.

From her belt dangled a bunch of dogwood blossoms—the first trophy of the season.

"See, look! they are coming!" and piquetting joyously, she shook the frail skiff until the oarlocks rattled.

Winslow sprang into the boat with her, his arm steadying her swaying figure, his hand in hers.

The black bulk of the unwieldy keel-boat was plainly visible—a dark line in the agate of river and sky.

Soon they could distinguish the forms of men on shore as they walked with bent head, and arms straining at the long cordelle, and there was a chorus of greeting.

It was indeed a cosmopolitan cry. The foreign twang of Spaniard and Frenchman joined to the lusty call of the American pioneer, while here and there an Indian gave a whoop of welcome, and even America added her unctuous dialect to the greeting that sounded over the water.

On came the men, and after them the boat, drawn like the carcass of some huge thing of the sea.

A landing was soon made, and the captain came ashore—a swaggering, ill-conditioned fellow, whose ox-like strength and ferocity of temper held his little world in check.

There was clamorous outcry for goods expected or space for new cargo, but it consumed little time, since a large dry goods box carried the average shipment.

The appearance of the boat—her crew and passengers, was anything but prepossessing. Rough, uncouth, and, for the most part, depraved, the prospect of a journey with such men was disheartening.

But Winslow and his party resolved to make the best of it, keeping themselves and their inopportune refinement as much in the background as possible. Cramped quarters were provided them, and when the boat was ready they took leave of the settlement, "with surprisingly little regret, considering your fondness for 'pot luck,'" Winslow said, laughingly to Lavender.

The boat made slow progress, but they found ample entertainment in the beauties of the view. The sky and water, the now verdant banks on either side, were constant food for thought or converse. But to the majority of their fellow-voyagers, blind to shifting cloud and changing shadow, to ice-creased bluff and towering pine, the hours dragged wearily.

Gambling was the chief diversion, and most of the men were inveterate players. Among these was a once wealthy planter journeying in company with an octoroon slave. He had lost a fortune at the gaming table, but was possessed with a fever to win it back at a like hazard. The woman usually watched his play, and her influence alone had thus far prevented his utter ruin. Over his shoulder she often hung, and her dark comeliness would attract him from the dice or cards.

Toward the close of the second day's travel Winslow walked into the forward cabin, where the planter sat at cards with two men. One of them, Pat Finch, the captain, shouted as Winslow entered: "Take a hand?"

"No, thanks, I'll look on."

There was silence, broken only by the rattle of coin, and the oaths of the players.

The air was stifling with the fumes of drink and tobacco, but Winslow remained, fascinated by the tense attitude of the gamblers. Evidently some untoward excitement was pending—the stakes were high.

Suddenly there was a gurgling cry of "Lost, by God!" and the planter fell face downward on the table, scattering cards and money in blind confusion.

Another pause, then Finch, the captain, spoke: "It was a fair game, and, damme, if she ain't mine!"

At the brutal words, the prostrate man rose, and shot a look of mingled hatred and pleading as would have touched a heart not mailed and proof. Suspicion of the frightful barter came over Winslow, but controlling a sickening sense of disgust, he asked, calmly: "Then the stakes were high, gentlemen?"

The planter groaned and dropped his head again to the table.

With a devil-may-care fling of his great shoulders, the captain rose. "High!" he repeated, "well, if there's a fair ween in the Louisiana territory, I'd like to have her, that's all."

At this the stricken player sprang to his feet, and with the grasp of a tiger was at the speaker's throat.

The door was suddenly opened, and the octoroon's wide, frightened eyes peered over the threshold.

Instantly the clinched men re-

laxed their hold, and the planter sank to his seat again.

With wondering anxiety the woman scanned each face, then timidly, approached the gambler: "William, master, speak to me—what is it?"

A groan was the only response; then roughly Finch, spoke: "We played until he lost everything he had—but you. Then, well, then he staked—and lost again."

The woman stood rigid. Over her eyes a horrid comprehension grew, darkening them like a film shutting out the light.

Finch grasped her with half scowl, half leer on his cruel face. "One man's meat is another man's pizen, you know, my girl."

With a shriek she turned from him to sink at the feet of her master. "Not me? You have not sold me?" and she murmured broken words of anguish, groveling on the floor, her head on his knee.

"We are intruding, senior."

It was the third player who spoke—a tall, heavy-browed Spaniard, his massive head covered with black curls on which was carelessly tilted a wide-brimmed hat. This he pulled lower, as if to hide the womanish pity in his eyes.

"Let us go," he said, "this is not the first time men have fought for a woman," and he turned away.

Winslow was tempted to follow—both from personal unwillingness to witness the harrowing scene, and from innate respect for the sanctity of sorrow. But just then he met the agonized gaze of the octoroon. All a woman's soul flashed from the eyes of this helpless chattel.

Rapidly his mind searched every avenue of escape for her. There was a way—he would try it.

"Will you tarry a moment?" and he closed the door as he spoke, "I have a suggestion to make."

There was a compelling power in his quiet words which made the crushed man raise his head with sudden hungry hope in the bloodshot eyes. The woman staggered to her feet. Capt. Finch rewarded the speaker with a glare of malignant questioning.

[To Be Continued.]

EARLY TOBACCO HISTORY.

Passage in an Ancient Book Describes the Weed in Quaint Fashion.

The antiquary took down a little brown book dated 1573.

"This little book," he said, "describes English life in Shakespeare's youth. It has a passage on tobacco that should interest you. A pipe, in this passage, is said to resemble in form a ladle. It does resemble a ladle, doesn't it?"

The passage in the old book ran:

"In these dates the taking in of the smoke of the Indian herbe called Tobacco by an instrument formed like a little ladle, whereby it passeth from the mouth into the head and stomach, is gretlie taken up and used in England against Rewmes and some other diseases ingendered in the lunges and other parts, and not without effect."

The herbe Tobacco is commonly of the height of a man, with grette long leaves; the colour of the floure is carnation, resembling that of the lemmion, in form, the roots yellow with many filletes.

"The first taste of Tobacco smoke is vile, but aromatick and swete enough, it becomes with usage, so as to make men its slaves. It is best taken with wine or beere."

No Reason for Two Trips.

Patrick's wife was "ailing," and Patrick put on his Sunday best and walked four miles to the doctor's house to tell him about her.

"Now," said the doctor, when he had heard all Patrick had to say, and had prepared some medicine, "there is something for your wife. I've written the directions on the bottle, and I want her to try it faithfully for a fortnight. Then, if it doesn't relieve her, come to me again and I will give you another prescription."

"Now, doctor, see here," said Patrick, standing straight and looking grimly at the physician. "If you have your doubts of this erin Mary, as its ivident you have by the way you spake, why don't you give me first what you're goin' to give me last?"—Yankee's Companion.

She Was in Training.

"We're going to have such a jolly time," said the girl in blue. "A dinner first, you know, and then a theater party. Of course you'll come?"

"I should like to above all things," returned the girl in gray, "but I fear it isn't possible."

"Isn't possible? Why not?"

"I'm not allowed to eat much of anything just now, and I fear such a dinner would be too great a temptation," explained the girl in gray, sadly.

"Dieting?" queried the girl in blue.

"Doctor's orders?"

"No; lawyer's."

"Yes; you see my breach of promise case comes to trial pretty soon, and I'm training down to show the ravages of blighted affection."—Chicago Journal.

She Meant Well.

Bishop Coleman, of Delaware, the Episcopal dignitary who every summer takes a two or three weeks' tour over the country, tramping incognito, is a man of tremendous appetite, and is proud of it, says the Philadelphia Evening Telegraph. But a story is related of a Kent county housewife who got the best of him. She was the learned prelate's hostess on one of his tramping tours, and, knowing very well who he was, set before him a dinner fit for a man of great labors. The bishop appreciated her cooking highly and told her so, but he was unprepared for her rejoinder: "Bless you, bishop, eat your fill, for I love to see ye eat, eat till ye bust; I wisht you would!"

THE PHOTOGRAPH
AND WILLIAM

By HAROLD WHITE

(Copyright, 1906, by Joseph B. Bowles.)

"William," I said, as kindly as possible, "it will either have to be found, or we part company—that is the right expression, I think, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," said William, scooping up the luncheon crumbs.

"How the deuce it could be lost passes my comprehension!" I added, glancing at the vacant space on the mantelpiece where the photograph used to stand. I missed it. It was not only pretty in itself, but I valued it; times had changed, but I say I valued it.

"Perhaps Mrs. Groom knows something about it," suggested William, without apparent interest.

"Nonsense!" I replied, irritably. "You know as well as I do that Mrs. Groom hasn't been near the place since this morning."

William apparently gave it up, and went on with his crumb-scooping.

"Did I understand, sir," he said, after a pause, "that you was to be back at ten-time with the young lady and her aunt, sir?"

William's remarks generally have a significance, and with practice it is possible to gather what that significance is. This time I saw at once what he meant by a certain pose of his head and the meditative manner in which he picked up the table-cloth.

"Confound your impertinence!" I said. "Look here, William, I'm not going to have you arrange my rooms according to your notions of propriety, or whatever it is. That photograph will have to be produced and put up exactly where it always stands."

"As you please, sir," said William. "I will see that it's looked for."

"Do you think I want you to manage my matrimonial affairs?" I went on. I was angry with him.

"I shouldn't take the liberty, sir."

"Who's going to notice the things?"

"Oh, I think they notice 'em, sir. It's my belief the women see with the backs of their heads. Besides, sir, it's natural that they should take stock, coming for the first time."

"And suppose they do?"

"Well, sir," said William, "in my opinion what the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve after, and least said soonest mended. Of course, sir, that may be only in my station in life, sir."

"Do you imagine that any woman would think that I have lived for three-and-thirty years without the diversion of feminine society?" I put it to him. "They may not think it, sir, but they like to believe it."

"But that's nonsense."

"Very likely, sir. It's my belief it's very much this way. A woman doesn't, no more than a man, imagine things in a general way; but if she finds a hook, she hangs a deal on it."

"But don't you see, William," I said, "that this entails a life of perpetual deceit?"

"I don't see, sir, begging your pardon, that any man is bound to incriminate himself."

"That is casuistry," I said. "Where, William, where are your ethics?"

"I don't know, sir. Perhaps I never had any, sir. I'm not familiar with the word."

"If you had," I said, "you would see that the one great condition of happiness between a man and a woman who are, or who are to become man and wife, is perfect confidence. There should be no secrets. Nothing should be kept back."

"Some have tried it, sir," said William, and paused thoughtfully. "I think if I was to look, sir, I might find the photograph in the wardrobe in your bedroom. Shall I look for it, sir?" he asked, walking to the door.

"Stop!" I said. "You say some have tried it. In your experience?"

"I've lived in married families, and I have come across it," said William.

"How did it work?"

"Oh! lor!" said William, and said nothing more.

"How often," I said, "are our naturally good impulses checked by the knowledge that if we let them go, they will only lead to harm in the end? My natural impulse is to befriend the beggar in the street, but I know that I shall only be encouraging vagrancy and drink, and things. My natural impulse is to have no skeleton in my cupboard, and no photographs concealed in the wardrobe of my bedroom—and then a man of experience tells me that if I let that impulse go, the result will very likely be appalling. I gathered, William, that the results in the other cases were appalling?"

William lifted his eyebrows and nodded.

"Then your advice, as a man of experience, is to arrange the mantelpiece without including the photograph?"

"Seeing what's written on it—"

"Seeing what's written on it, you think that on the whole it would be as well to—er—exclude the photograph?"

"If it isn't a liberty, sir," said William.

"The mantelpiece will look very empty without it," I suggested.

"Yes, sir; that's in the nature of things I suppose, sir," said William. "Perhaps it is as well to get used to it, sir, if I may make so bold."

"Yes, yes. And are there any other improvements you would suggest?"

"No, sir," said William, glancing round. "I think we shall show up pretty well as we are."

"I will take your advice, William," I said. "And when I am married, William, you shall come and arrange my matrimonial squabbles for me."

"Thank you, sir," said William, "couldn't undertake it."

Arrangements were made to take a sunlight photograph at the bottom of the shaft of a mine 2,000 feet deep at Sombrerete, in Mexico, on June 21, the only day in the year when the sun shines there. Even then its rays touch the bottom of the mine for only three minutes.

That an article may be good as well as cheap, and give entire satisfaction, is proven by the extraordinary sale of Defiance Starch, each package containing one-third more Starch than can be had of any other brand for the same money.

Subject for Another Lecture.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Mrs. Slapdash, when they were finally seated in the carriage. "I've only got one of my earrings on. I left the other on my dressing table."

"Huh!" grunted her husband, "just like my lectures on your carelessness—in one ear and out the other."

"Cut out hot cream of tartar biscuit" used to be a common, every-day remark among physicians when discussing items of diet for their patients. But alum baking powder biscuits are never mentioned in this respect. Why? Because it's the cream of tartar that is objectionable and injurious, and yet there are some people who to-day continue to use the old cream of tartar baking powder, and wonder why they are always ailing.

Twelve Good Rules.

Speaking of rules: Do you remember or can you recollect the "Twelve Good Rules" of King Charles I. They are worth pasting in your hat for daily perusal, in case you do not care to memorize them:

1. Urge no healths.
2. Profane no divine ordinance.
3. Touch no state matters.
4. Reveal no secrets.
5. Pick no quarrels.
6. Make no comparisons.
7. Maintain no ill opinions.
8. Keep no bad company.
9. Encourage no vice.
10. Make no long meals.
11. Repeat no grievances.
12. Lay no wagers.—New York Press.

Three Great Conversationalists. The three greatest conversationalists with whom it has been my good fortune to come into